

# THE KEY



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League

## Repeater

146.970 PL 131.8



## RARC Net

The club's weekly net is 8 p.m. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.



## Programs

7 p.m. Tue. Dec. 2, election of officers; "Instructor" by Roger Reader, KA9BKK,

## Club meetings

Club meetings are at Gundersen/Lutheran in La Crosse. They are in meeting room 1 on the lower level of the clinic.

"Meeting of Elmers," advice, discussion and help is at 6 p.m. meeting night.



Skywarn Recognition Day 2013 included operators (L-R) Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, Chris Kanable, KC9CMD, Bill Wood, KE9XQ, Bill Kleinschmidt, N9FDE, and Todd Shea, KB9YXS.

## Why we storm Skywarn Recognition

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

When tennis ball sized hail is pounding your car you are not thinking of being appreciated so much as considering it is not a good place to be at the time. A much better place is the warmth of the La Crosse National Weather Service Office for Skywarn Recognition Day, Sat. Dec. 6.

It's true you may participate in Skywarn Recognition Day on the air chasing the many NWS offices operating special event stations but being at the NWS office is more fun for eyeball QSOs, meeting the meteorologists, eating food and operating one of the special event's radios.

If you do participate from home, the NWS offers certificates for the number of NWS special event stations contacted. <http://www.wrbl.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/>

The La Crosse NWS operation is at N2788 County Road FA, and it's easy to get there if a snowstorm is not underway. Warning Coordination Meteorologist Todd Shea, KB9YXS, will welcome you. You'll recognize his voice from hearing it on the repeater on

those bad May and June days. Inside two or three radios are set up for the special event and you are invited to operate if you wish. You'll have to push by a number of other Hams who are chowing down what good Ham event goes without food? and chatting.

Hams come from the 14 county La Crosse NWS territory, some of whom you've met.

Once you elbow your way through the conference room you see the three or four on duty meteorologists in their bull pen. Shea is happy to guide you through the area showing you what the staff is doing and the equipment they have at their disposal.

Hours of operation are from 8 a.m. 4 p.m.

**DIRECTIONS** to N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse: travel east on Main St. to ward Grandad Bluff. Main St. becomes Bliss Rd. Continue up Bliss Rd. past the Alpine Inn to County Road FA. Turn onto FA and continue about a mile to the National Weather Service. It is easily recognizable by the Nexrad 'ball.'



## Ray Wakeen, W9HHM, SK

Raymond G. Wakeen, 83, W9HHM, died Thanksgiving day, Nov.27.

He attended La Crosse State Teachers College, UW-Madison, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean conflict. Wakeen was employed as an engineer at Allis-Chalmers for 22 years, NCR for nine-1/2 years, and Trane Company for 15 years. Wakeen held many patents relating to those jobs.

Wakeen was an avid Amateur Radio operator and in recent years was a familiar and friendly voice on the '97 repeater as well as local simplex FM frequencies. His stories were intriguing and sometimes suspect; in one he told of flying a plane under the Cass St. bridge and losing his pilot's license. He enjoyed taking aerial photos and loved cooking Lebanese foods.

Wakeen is survived by; his wife Lois; daughter, grandchildren, brother and nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Dec. 1, at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish at St. Thomas More Catholic Church. Friends may call on Sunday from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. at Schumacher Kish Funeral & Cremation Services of La Crosse, and at the church on Monday from 9:30 a.m. until the time of services.



Some of Santa's elves are (L-R) Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, Art Osborn, W0JDC, and Roger Reader, KA9BKK, all of whom helped La Crosse's Rotary Lights Nov. 29.

## Club members do elf duty

Santa's good, little elves again busied themselves making La Crosse's Rotary Lights a nicer event. The elves, Dan Abts, AB9TS, Art Osborn, W0JDC, Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, and Bill Wood, KE9XQ, provided post opening clean up and odd jobs Saturday, Nov. 29.

The night before, Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, operated the club float in

the Rotary Lights Parade.

Abts and Thurston also decorated the club Christmas tree for the event. It's on the river (west) side of Riverside Park near the cannon.

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club has been a contributing partner in Rotary Lights and also a beneficiary. The club's participation the tree, the parade and the work detail is a small fundraiser for the club.



'Elves' Bill Wood, KE9XQ, and Dan Abts, AB9TS, emptied garbage cans as their part of Rotary Lights participation.

## Riverland Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, Wis. 54650



President ..... Greg Miller, KA9FOZ  
Vice-president..... Van Elston, WA9FIO  
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This newsletter is sent by e mail to current and past RARC members and others. If you wish to change your address or subscription, e mail [KC9IWE@arrl.net](mailto:KC9IWE@arrl.net)



# Our wonderfully changing hobby

By Bill Wood, KE9XQ



I like Ham radio, because it is not only a service, where you would want the latest and greatest, in order to do a good job in emergencies service aspect and then there are those of us who look at the hobby aspect and enjoy tinkering and re-inventing that proverbial wheel.

There is plenty of room for both ends of that spectrum, and even a marriage in some respects depending on the particular situation at hand.

Maybe the days of EMP are over, but some still like the hollow state goodies. You cannot set this hobby back 20 years,

you can only look back and maybe enjoy some of the oldies but goodies. I still love old R & R and Country Western music, and can't even stand 99 percent of the newer stuff.

While I personally like the older equipment like my two HW 7s and several tube receivers, I do plan on one of these days springing for a new or gently used SDR. For now I really cannot afford one. Most of my rigs were \$50 or less, and I did buy a couple over the years for \$300-400. Forgot about my 706. Worked all summer for that one raking leaves and cleaning up properties for a gent. I had to save up for them, and I have always lived on a very limited budget. When I decide to buy one, will have to sell something, or start to save my nickels and dimes.

While I have not played with my nickel dongle yet, I do plan on having some fun with it. I know of one gent who tracked his kids up the California coast via his dongle, and while I do not know the protocols and nomenclature, it was pretty amazing to me, so there is plenty to learn with these el-cheapos. I may have to ask you gurus a few questions.

## President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Christmas is almost here and I still do not have that antenna analyzer that I want. Maybe this will be the year. I checked back into my records and don't see where I was bad enough to warrant a black piece of coal again.

Whereas your antenna system is an integral part of your ham shack it is very important to make sure it is tuned up properly. Antenna analyzers will give you the information you need to understand what your antenna and feed line are doing. I know there are plenty of analyzers out there that I can borrow but it is something I always wanted to have in my testing kit. So Santa, keep me in mind.

Have you noticed the many different subjects there are in Amateur Radio, I'm sure you have. I think that is one of the reasons that makes this hobby so interesting. Do you pick out a subject related to Amateur Radio and try to find out more about it? To me that is a good way to enhance your enjoyment of the hobby. That is what I did with SWR. When I have some free time (please don't tell my wife that I have free time,

that might be the last time you hear me on the radio....heck, it might be the last time you see me), I will pick a subject and study it and see how it works with Ham Radio. As a new Amateur you will hear the older Hams talk about SWR and its relationship to your station's performance. When you hear things like this take the opportunity and get online or grab your ARRL Handbook and look it up and study what they are talking about. This is the way to learn and keep up on the hobby. I have been a Ham for 35 years and I knew what SWR was but I thought I would do a little refresher on it and as I read about it I learned more on the subject. That's what I like about doing this type of study, you always learn more each time you dig into a subject.

The next RARC meeting will be Tuesday Dec. 2, and as you know we have the election of officers at that meeting. Nominations from the floor will be taken so bring your desires to the meeting. Club dues are also decided at that meeting so if you have any input on this also bring that to the meeting. As an added feature at the meeting

Roger Reader, KA9BKK, will bring an Instructograph for us to look at. He will describe how such a device works. Below is a little description of such a device.



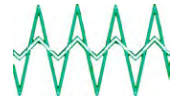
The Instructograph was a paper tape-based machine used for the study of Morse code.

The paper tape mechanism consisted of two reels which passed a paper tape across a reading device. The paper tape consisting of a series of holes.

The Instructograph was in production from 1920 to 1983. The latest version of the Instructograph was the model 500 which included a built in solid state oscillator.

If you have something interesting to share with the club, by all means bring it to the meeting so we all can see.

So see you at the meeting if not, let's talk on the air.



# Collected thoughts as the year ends

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

With but one more task to complete to end this year, the election of officers at the December meeting, it's time to reflect on 2014 and to look forward to 2015. For the last several years, the RARC has prospered at an ever increasing rate. 2014 was no exception. Our club has expanded its activities, and its membership has grown as well. Our membership total at the end of 2013 stood at 32. 2014 is ending with a total membership of 37. There were a few Silent Keys this year that were offset by a surge in young Hams coming into the club. It is sad to have Silent Keys, but the influx of new younger Hams are most welcome.

New members bring new ideas, and we are blessed with both. Several of the new Hams are active in the club events and help out with the Sunday night net. This last task is one that is especially important, as hosting the net can be very tiresome, week after week.

Looking back over the club's list of events we see growth there as well.

The year always starts off with our Holiday Party, followed by Winter Field Day. The weather is not always very inviting the night of our party and Winter Field Day can be a real test of endurance as the weather is seldom anything but brutal.

Next on the list is usually Field Day, our biggest and most well received activ

ity. The efforts expended to make this event successful are by far greater than any other event in yearly calendar. The logistic of pulling together all of the people, equipment, food, and beverages is handled very efficiently. It amazes me how well everyone works together to have a successful Field Day. The last several Field Days have been especially fine in large part due to the combination of the use of Greg Miller's, KA9FOZ, QTH for the venue and the management skills of Dan Abts. AB9TS, who brings it all together.

For some time the club has marshaled run/walks and bike athons, and we continue to do so. The annual Chileda Run/Walk is no more, but we picked up the La Crosse Half Marathon instead. The annual Minds in Motion Bicycle Tour in Onalaska is in June and we're still out there in full force providing communications over a large part of La Crosse and Jackson Counties. The MS Walk continues to be popular and every year it's bigger than the previous year.

There has been some talk of having the RARC Hams marshal the Oktoberfest Maple Leaf Parade, but nothing happened this year, maybe next year.

A SwapFest has been a big deal in the RARC year for some time, but this year's event was unusually successful. It was well attended, and it made enough money to ensure its continuance for

some time.

Our National Wildlife Refuge Week Special Event Station at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge continues to be enjoyable. The setting is always nice, as is the weather. The QSOs are always interesting and fun. This is a non competitive event so it makes for a very relaxing time.

We end the year's activities with Sky Warn Appreciation Day. This is a special event as it is sponsored by the National Weather Service at its office on top of Grandad's Bluff. It is open to all Hams regardless of club affiliation. Because of this, it is one of the few times in the year when so many Hams can come together to enjoy the comradeship of working together, meeting, and enjoying the refreshments and other goodies furnished by the weather service in appreciation for the help that Hams offer throughout the year for spotting and reporting storm conditions.



## Calendar

### Tue. Dec. 2

↔ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, election of officers and "Instructograph," 7 p.m., Gundersen Clinic Lower Level One meeting room. Elmer session, 6 p.m.

### Sat. Dec. 6

↔ Skywarn Recognition Day, 8 a.m.- 3 p.m., La Crosse National Weather Service office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.

### Tue. Jan. 6

↔ Riverland Amateur Radio Club Holiday Party, 6 p.m., Schmidty's, 3119 State Rd, La Crosse, WI 54601.



## Relationships

If you do not know key people you will not be allowed in for emergency response. Credentialing badging and good relationships will get you in.

- Dennis Rybiecki, K9LGU/STM